

Susan Bloomfield, West Kennebunk, ME.

P-5362-021 - Maine, Lower Mousam Project, Kennebunk Light and Power District

Dear Secretary Bose:

I am a Kennebunk resident and have been closely following the saga of dam relicensing on the Mousam River for over five years. Kennebunk Light and Power District (KLPD), the current owners of the three lowermost dams, has recently submitted its dam surrender plan to you. Its proposal is to gut the equipment within the Dane Perkins, Twine Mill and Kesslen dams and leave the dams to decay in place.

I am strongly advocating for the elimination of these dams to allow anadromous fish (primarily shad and river herring) to return to their upriver spawning grounds and to restore the river to its natural bed and seasonal flowage. The removal of these dams will eventually return the Mousam to some semblance of ecological balance without impediments and impoundments. It could become an extraordinarily beautiful river, offering exceptional, passive recreational opportunities. I would certainly partake of paddling and riverside walks, things only enjoyed upriver to a limited degree.

At a recent KLPD public meeting on the subject, twenty six speakers, most of them Kennebunk residents, similarly advocated for removing the dams to allow the river to run naturally. Representatives from the Maine Department of Marine Resources, the Sebago (ME) Chapter of Trout Unlimited, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service spoke either in favor of total dam removal or offered technical assistance to KLPD to pursue that possibility. Several of these organizations have made sincere overtures in the past but KLPD has never accepted their substantial and valuable guidance. This is a complex issue and one would think that their professional advice would be welcomed. Many Board members are riverfront owners and have unquestionably let their personal biases limit valuable, science-based input.

KLPD's surrender plan was criticized by speakers on a number of fronts. For example, it states that gutting and retaining the dams "would have no environmental effects." Speaker after speaker begged to differ citing numerous studies and personal testimonials of the effects of dams on migratory fish and the river's diverse habitats. Other speakers stated their fears for public safety if the dams were abandoned in place and left to slowly disintegrate. A future generation should not be saddled with this responsibility.

In a recent article about Maine's Kennebec River (*Morning Sentinel/Portland Press Herald*; 4/9/2021), Reporter Greg Levinsky stated "Maine has established itself as a nationwide leader in restoration of river system and the sea-run fish that spawn in them." Gutting the Mousam dams and merely leaving them in place is an irresponsible choice and unbelievable in this day and age. As KLPD is rightly surrendering the dams, they should finish the job and take full responsibility for removing them to open the river and restore the health and vitality of the Mousam. It is in Kennebunk and the state's best interest.

I thank you for the opportunity to voice my opinion.

Respectfully,

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